

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Arechiga was a veteran of the U.S. Army and was a member of Company F, 333rd Infantry, serving in the Rhineland and Central Europe. He served bravely from November 25, 1942 to December 9, 1945, when he was honorably discharged.

For his dedication while in the service, he received the American Theater Campaign Ribbon, the EAME Campaign Ribbon with three bronze stars and a Good Conduct Medal.

Mr. Arechiga was an electrician who was one of the founding members of the Laredo Electrical Association which was formed in 1948. As his business expanded, he developed a construction firm that was contracted to build the first Sears and Roebuck buildings in Barcelona, Spain and San Juan, Puerto Rico.

When he returned to Laredo, he became a well-known residential contractor and established his own local construction company. Mr. Arechiga was an important part of Laredo's growth in the late 1970's and we are proud to have had such a respected person as a citizen of Laredo.

ON THE 24TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSING OF DANIEL FAULKNER: HONORING PENNSYLVANIA LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN THE LINE OF DUTY

HON. ALLYSON Y. SCHWARTZ

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Ms. SCHWARTZ of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, on December 9, 1981, Daniel J. Faulkner, a five-year veteran of the Philadelphia Police Department was shot and killed while making a routine traffic stop. Although he was only 25 when he left us, Officer Faulkner achieved many things. He was a loving husband, an active church parishioner, and a respected member of his Northeast Philadelphia community.

Since Officer Faulkner's murder, more than 115 brave men and women in uniform have given their lives while serving and protecting the communities of Pennsylvania.

My colleagues, these fallen officers paid the ultimate price for their service to our Nation. They left behind family, friends and colleagues. And we must never forget their contributions to the safety, security and betterment of our neighborhoods.

So today, I rise to pay tribute to and remember the 140 law enforcement officers who died this year in the line-of-duty in our Nation. In particular, I rise in honor of the four fallen law enforcement officers from my home state of Pennsylvania:

York County Sheriff Deputy Edward "Skip" Schroeder;

Easton Police Department Officer Jesse Sollman;

City of Philadelphia Officer Paris Williams; and

Newton Borough Police Department Officer Brian Gregg.

Mr. Speaker, these officers' sense of dedication will forever be remembered by their family, friends, loved ones, and the Nation. And I know that all of my colleagues, and all Americans, join me in honoring their sacrifice in the line of duty.

CONFERENCE REPORT ON H.R. 2528, MILITARY QUALITY OF LIFE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2006

SPEECH OF

HON. BETTY McCOLLUM

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, November 18, 2005

Ms. McCOLLUM of Minnesota. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the conference report on Military Quality of Life/Veterans Affairs appropriations for Fiscal Year 2006 and to commend the conferees for their hard work on this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a difficult year for veterans—there has been misrepresentation, confusion, and overall misuse of the funding allocated to the Medical Services Account for the Department of Veterans Affairs. I have heard from veterans in my District, and throughout Minnesota, of their extreme concern regarding funding for the VA. Veterans in Minnesota and this country have told me that they are worried about how the funding shortfall that was revealed over the summer will directly impact their VA benefits.

The good news for veterans today is this bill provides \$22.5 billion for Veterans Medical Services for Fiscal Year 2006, \$1.7 billion more than the current funding level and 3 percent more than the Administration's request. This conference report also provides \$1.2 billion in emergency funding for the Medical Services account. I am pleased to be able to tell Minnesota veterans that Congress heard their concerns, values their service, and will keep our promises regarding their health care.

The mental health and welfare of our returning soldiers, and of our veterans, must be a priority. The agreement also includes \$2.2 billion specifically reserved for mental health care, and designates \$15 million: for further research into Gulf War Illness. Too many soldiers return and do not have access to proper mental health care. We have an obligation to do all that we can to address these conditions and help these brave men and women rebuild their lives. This bill takes an important step in providing this care.

I am also very pleased that Congress rejected the Administration's proposals for imposing new fees for health care services. When the Administration proposed a \$250 enrollment fee for particular veterans without service-connected disabilities, and an increase in drug co-payments to \$15, I heard loud and clear from the veterans throughout Minnesota that this would greatly impact their health and well-being.

Veterans' health care should not be cut to solve the budget deficit. Veterans deserve to continue to have access to affordable, quality health care. It is what they were promised and it is our responsibility to ensure that those services remain for today's—and tomorrow's—servicemen and women.

Mr. Speaker, the Americans who have served our country in the Armed Services deserve to return home to a country that values their service. This agreement reflects, in part, the gratitude of Congress for their sacrifices, and I am proud to support it.

HONORING OUTGOING BUFFALO CITY COUNCILMAN JEFFREY CONRAD

HON. BRIAN HIGGINS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 8, 2005

Mr. HIGGINS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor Jeffrey Conrad, a great son of South Buffalo, New York, who will complete his service as a member of the Buffalo Common Council on December 31, 2005.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the Buffalo Common Council, I know of what I speak. Having served as a member of that body in the same seat as Mr. Conrad from 1988 to 1993, I know and understand the position of district councilmember in the city of Buffalo. In that job, Mr. Speaker, you are never presented with good news; you are only presented with crumbling sidewalks and broken streetlights, with poorly paved roads and neighbors complaining about nearby lots that need mowing.

In short, Mr. Speaker, this job is one of the toughest in local government. Jeff Conrad handled that job with dignity and aplomb, and I am pleased to honor his service here today.

Jeff Conrad is a bright young leader in South Buffalo. While his first run for public office was unsuccessful, Jeff is a solid individual from a great South Buffalo family, and he has a very bright future full of promise in months and years to come.

While Jeff Conrad served only a few short months as a member of the Buffalo Common Council, his commitment to the neighborhoods we live in and the people who inhabit them can never be overstated. Jeff's service to his constituents was effective and honorable, and I look forward to future opportunities to work with him to make our community a better place to live, work and raise a family.

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 4340, UNITED STATES-BAHRAIN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. ELLEN O. TAUSCHER

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 7, 2005

Mrs. TAUSCHER. Mr. Speaker, as Chair of the New Democrat Coalition, I rise today on behalf of the New Dem Co-Chairs, RON KIND, ARTUR DAVIS, and ADAM SMITH, to voice support of the United States-Bahrain Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act.

Passage of this free trade agreement will help strengthen the United States' relationship with Bahrain and build a more secure and productive future for our countries and citizens.

We believe when instituted correctly and fairly, trade agreements open up foreign markets to U.S. goods, create new opportunities for companies and their employees, and lift the standard of living for the people in the countries with whom we are trading.

As our Nation leads the world into the 21st century, we should not shy away from opportunities to guide and expand global trade.

U.S. goods exported to Bahrain totaled \$302 million in 2004, constituting .03 percent of total U.S. merchandise trade in 2004.